

Utah State Charter School Board Perspective on Student Achievement

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Purpose of Performance Framework

- Over the past two years , the State Charter School Board has worked to identify some common performance standards
 - to provide best practice targets for charter school governing boards so they can see where they should be heading;
 - to act as an early warning system to alert charter school governing boards where they may be getting off track; and
 - to help the State Charter School Board perform its statutory duty of monitoring charter school performance and holding the schools accountable.

Indicator Areas

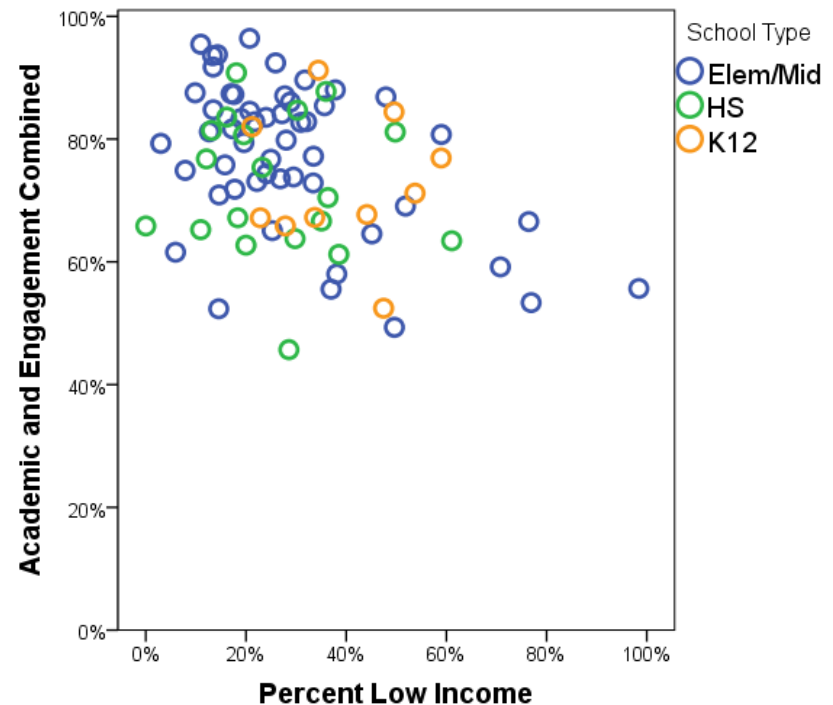
- The performance standards are separated into seven indicator areas, including:
 - Board performance and stewardship
 - Student attendance and reenrollment
 - Student achievement level
 - Student progress over time
 - Post-secondary readiness (secondary schools)
 - Financial performance and sustainability
 - Upholding mission and purpose
- For the purpose of the charter school *Baseline Performance Report 2012*, the indicators were combined into three areas:
(1) Academic Performance, (2) Financial Performance, and
(3) Governance Performance.

Academic Indicators

- Includes academic and student engagement metrics
 - Proficiency on required state tests, as found in UCAS
 - Growth on required state tests, as found in UCAS
 - Within year continuous enrollment rate
 - Year-to-year reenrollment rate
 - Average membership
 - Graduation rate (secondary schools only)
 - Met ACT benchmarks (secondary schools only)

Observations of Note

- While much effort was made to combine the academic measures in such a way as to not unfairly disadvantage specific school types and student populations, some of the individual scores may differ according to the school type or student populations.
- Different school types are distributed throughout the Academic combined measure.
- There is a very weak correlation between the Academic combined measure and percent of low income students ($r^2 = .14$).



Best Practices

- Schools in the Highest Quartile are those from which we can learn lessons.
- Schools in the Lowest Quartile are those that would most likely benefit from technical support and mentoring.
- Schools in the Mid-High and Mid-Low Quartiles have room for improvement.

When Should Schools be Included?

- There is some evidence supporting not comparing new charter schools to established charter schools.
 - A recent study by Ni & Rorrer (2012) found
 - That while Utah elementary charter schools on average perform slightly lower than traditional public elementary schools, the negative results are mainly driven by charter schools in their organizational infancy.
 - As elementary charter schools mature, they perform similar to traditional public elementary schools.
 - Newly established secondary charter schools perform as well as traditional public secondary schools from their inception.
- New charter schools will receive additional technical support while working toward meeting the measured indicators.

Competitive Effects of Charter Schools

- There is some evidence suggesting positive effects from charter competition on Utah students who remain in traditional public schools, which become more substantial in the long-run. (see work done by Martineau, 2012)
 - For example, a district with at least 6% of its students attending charter schools saw an academic improvement in math that equates to (in an average sized school) approximately 6 additional students being proficient in the same year and approximately 8 additional students being proficient after two years.
- The estimates are substantial considering that they represent marginal effects of competition after controlling for demographic, school-level, and time characteristics, as well as historical trends.